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595 the son. A dué likes many wives because he tires of cohabiting with
554 one and because such multiplicity creates more sons and daughters, so that he will have more waku, dué, and galle, with stronger bonds between him and them.

513 When in camp a woman sleeps with her back to her husband. If
833 intercourse takes place it is in this position so that no one can be aware of what they are doing.

A dué and galle never copulate during a woman's pregnancy, lest
843 the child be born dead or die early in infancy, the mother's milk being
834 soured by her husband's semen. If a child is born dead the parents are blamed. If a baby dies, the brother and father of the mother criticize
620 their actions throughout the camp in loud voices for her and other members of the tribe to hear. Since sexual intercourse has usually occurred between dué and galle after what they feel should have been the regulated time, they say nothing and do not resent the criticism.

After a child is born the woman and man wait several days before
846 resuming sexual relations. The wife goes through a short ceremony that is both therapeutic and ritualistic. She enters the bush with a female relative such as momo, mari, or mokul bapa, and places some stones on a fire. When these are hot she squats over the fire and the other woman throws water over the stones. The steam is supposed to heal, cleanse and close her uterus and make it small again.

846 A woman during this period sleeps facing her husband, who does
833 not try to touch her but waits until she turns from him and starts making casual conversation. He realizes then that she wants him. After his first intercourse with his wife following the birth of a child, the husband always rises early and bathes himself. If he did not, he would look like an animal to the other men and feel ashamed before them.[11]

593 A woman gathers the small game, nuts, bulbs, yams, and other
222 vegetable food, as well as all shell food for the family. A man always has first right to the food brought by her. She and her daughters have
462 eaten all they wish while gathering it. A wife usually cooks the food
262 she has brought for her husband. A large part of a family's larder is contributed by the wife. Big game is supplied by the men, who also bring in fish and large sea animals such as turtle, porpoise, dugong and shark.

[11] There is considerable evidence that there is a comparatively strong taboo on sexual relations between man and wife after the man has seen a totem the first time. It is said that the ceremonial leader for the totem would be so angry that he would attempt to spear the culprit.

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593 688 152 at the time that it was to his clan as though she had killed a strong man. Her husband said nothing, but hurried her to a mission on a nearby island to shield her against possible attacks of his own people. He risked being injured himself for this, but he was more concerned for her. This was not merely because of her economic or child-bearing value. He had an older wife, who had borne him a daughter, whom he loved even more than his younger wife; and the older woman was still a sexual mate and a very able food-gatherer. Yet he told me he would have let them kill the old woman, for she was "rubbish," but that he liked the young galle "too much" and he could not let them kill her.

593 578 837 One further instance may be cited. One of Benaitjimaloi's three wives, the oldest, was notorious for her promiscuity. She had not only been beaten by him, but at one time all the people of a camp had thrashed her for her misconduct. Benaitjimaloi had acquired her by a runaway union. She had been caught in a sexual relation with Bindjerpuma. The husband fought the lover and then said to everybody that he was tired of her continual affairs, was through with her, and that she could go where she pleased. Then he gave her a thorough beating. One of the older men in the tribe, and one of the most intelligent, said, "He won't give her away. I see inside his head. He beat her after he said he'd thrown her away; that shows that he likes that woman too much." Benaitjimaloi kept his wife.

595 484 342 462 A man and all his wives live in the same camp. If he is going on a long journey he usually leaves some of them with their parents, taking only one with him. When a house is to be built the women usually construct the ordinary windbreak type, but sometimes a man helps them. The husband brings in the heavy stringy bark for the small, dome-shaped house used by most of the people during the rainy season. The women keep the house clean. It is felt that the house belongs to the man and the women.

595 578 The wives live in a fair degree of amiability, but there is sometimes jealousy over their husband.

Dorng, a man past middle age, but still very active, had three wives, of whom Opossum was the youngest. He complained one day:

"My wives growl at each other all the time. The two old ones are good friends, but they are jealous of Opossum. They say to her, 'Why don't you get another man? This man is our husband. He made our children come. He belongs to us. He doesn't belong to you.' Opossum says, 'Where am I to go? My other dué are too old; I'd be the same as dead if I lived with

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For the purposes of the blood feud all children, including boys until the time they have a beard, are classed as women; it is felt wrong to kill very young men, who are usually not allowed to accompany the older men on fighting expeditions.

When a man sees the python totem for the first time he must have a moustache and beard. The young men who have not been initiated into the Djungguan by seeing the python totemic emblem are allowed to sit back of the brush hut where the totem is kept. If they are able to look through the wall, they must keep their heads down so that they cannot see what is inside. They are allowed to call out at the end of each song in the chorus with the older men.

When the time comes for them to paint for the last Djungguan ceremony, these young men who have not seen the totem go off to a little depression in the ground or behind some bushes some distance from the old men's camp and put their decorations on by themselves.

Men obtain their wives at almost any age after they have reached maturity, the first usually when the beard begins, and the others at any time after that through the operation of the levirate or because promised by their mother's brothers. For example, several old men over sixty had several female children promised them as wives. The best time for a boy to marry is when his moustache appears, when he "looks like a proper man," and not until then. His father and mother, as well as father-in-law, exert pressure on him to see that he remains single, and they also observe his behavior to make sure that he does not have contact with a girl before that, although usually their efforts are unsuccessful. "Gawel is on the lookout and no business happens with that girl. He says to the father and mother, 'I'll listen for you people too.'" A young man said to me, "We do not sleep with girls before we are married because we are afraid of the old people. Sometimes a girl who belongs to another man says yes and we do. If it is found out the proper husband raises a row, and maybe her father. Sometimes a boy gets killed this way and sometimes they only cut him until the blood comes" (in a makarata).

The proper time for a girl to marry is when her breasts first start developing.

In the married people's camp the husband and wife "own" the hut because they both participate in the making of it and both live in it. The woman ordinarily keeps it clean and throws away the garbage which collects about the floor. Usually she makes the fire and it is her duty to bring in the wood. It is also her duty to cook the shell

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462 food, yams, and other vegetable food. This is generally done communally by the women in the bush where the food is gathered, but women also cook within the camp. Men cook the larger animals, [565] prepare the stone ovens, place the large chunks of meat in the fire, and tend the food to see that it is being properly treated.—It is considered [562] as within the bounds of propriety for the man to move about the camp at night in the way he pleases, but "all women must stay in the house when the men are at home."

851 Definite taboos are removed from a man's diet when he becomes a 262 father (see pages 68 and 69), as from a woman's when she becomes a mother or too old to have children. After the birth of the child, the parents paint themselves. He takes the bones of his first kills from the basket which had been made by his mother and carries them some distance from the camp. Here a hollow log is cut in the same shape as that for the bones of a dead man, and the bones are put inside it. The "coffin" is put up in the camp in the same manner as a dead man's carved hollow-log coffin. The people who have had meat from the boy while he could not eat put presents of food in his clan's symbolic well, made while he was painting himself.—If a man had eaten [626] of the tabooed foods while in the lower age grades, it is supposed he would become weak and unable to throw a spear in a spear fight; in a makarata it is likely that a spear will go into his leg, it will swell up and his flesh grow rotten while the spear is in his leg. This will also happen if the bones of the animals killed are not put in a hollow log and treated properly. If a young childless man ate porcupine, he would not grow up because "porcupine is a short one."

851 The reason given for the release from the taboos (see also page 69) is that the young man "becomes more quiet then and does not run about everywhere after other women. He stays in one place and looks out for his own gulle and children." In reality, his social personality has grown so that his actual relatives include descending relatives as well as ascending. The birth of a child heightens his emotional ties with his relatives who have children who will marry his children and, in all, puts him in a different status, which is expressed by the release of the food taboos. All this underlying thought agrees with the Murngin idea that marriage does not become complete and permanent until a child is born.

561 Age grading in Murngin societies is highly ritualistic and controls a man's religious life far more than it does his ordinary daily existence. A man's religious knowledge and his understanding of the sacred

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consummation of his family of procreation through his first child's "birth" effects the father's spiritual birth into a recognized higher status in the community age grouping, and simultaneously the new being is taken into the lowest age grade.

As an old man, the Murngin learns the final mysteries of life by seeing the most esoteric of the totems. Ultimately he dies and assumes a new social status, and by the mourning rite of passage enters his last social grouping, for he still retains a social personality of his own as long as he is in the memory of his group. His ultimate fate is loss of social personality when he is forgotten as an individual and remembered only as an undifferentiated part of a long line of clan ancestors and is absorbed in the general sacredness of the clan well. The sacred power of the clan well derives in part from the knowledge of the souls of the long and the recent dead dwelling within it. The dead soul, when it is ceremonially ushered into the totemic well, is a spiritual part of the man's or woman's participation in the land of the living. The woman's spiritual existence, although not primary and direct as thought of by the Murngin, is nevertheless real and identifiable, for she has a number of sacred totemic names known to her father and brothers, she comes from the totemic water hole as a fish, and vicariously, and to some extent directly, participates in all the sacred totemic rituals. Her partial participation in these rituals which are enacted outside the men's ground also gives her a certain amount of ritualization.

As a man becomes more deeply integrated into his daily community life, that is, when he becomes old enough to go on expeditions as a responsible member of the blood feud and to be held accountable by the enemies of the clan as a part of his group, and when he marries and has children and extends his kinship personality by primary contacts, he at the same time grows deeper and deeper into his esoteric existence and becomes more deeply learned in the rituals and the sacred language.

A review of the chapter on economics and technology quickly convinces one that men make and use the greater number of the more complex tools, weapons, and implements. If all the complexities of the technological apparatus as a part of the society's adaptation to its natural environment were charted, each process receiving a line symbolizing its part in the general technical behavior, it would become apparent that the greater the complexity of the technology, the greater the participation of the men in it, and the simpler the technological processes, the more women participate. There is a possible correlation

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462 562 561

between the women's restricted social participation in such parts of the culture as ritual and myth and their simple technological behavior. Technological behavior obviously is connected with the age-grading situation in Murngin society. It is impossible to say which causes which—both are part of the male-female social dichotomy. There can be no question, however, but that the general profane participation of the women in the technological and economic life of the people is just as restricted when it comes to participating in the more elaborate and highly skilled technical processes as it is in the ritual of the tribe; and that the men's highly developed participation in Murngin ritual finds its counterpart in their greater participation in economic and technological processes which demand a greater degree of manual dexterity and skill and are far more complex techniques. The most elaborate and only complex technique a woman uses is that of making baskets. All other processes which she uses are comparatively simple, with the possible exception of helping to construct some of the bark houses. The same is true of her economic behavior. The digging of yams, the gathering of shells, of roots, of fruit, are probably the simplest of all the economic processes found in Murngin society. It is with these things she is chiefly engaged. Among men the harpooning of turtles—which includes such elaborate technical background as the making of a canoe, its sailing and proper use, the construction of the harpoon and its use—is probably at the maximum end of Murngin technological complexity. As a boy grows up his participation in the use of these techniques grows, paralleled by his ritual growth.

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In other words, as he generally extends his social personality further into the group in his daily life, he is, at definite intervals, admitted into a deeper understanding of the religious life. If in no other way, he becomes aware of this by being part of the group which forces the younger men through these same rites. He realizes that he enters many of the ceremonies as a part of his older age group, and that he is becoming part of the Python spirit, as when he gives his blood to the Python's Djungguan rite or when he dances with the sacred blood on him. This identification with the essential holiness or final sacred power necessitates, he realizes, careful conduct and a minute regulation of his daily behavior, for he risks profaning this spirit within himself and resultant sickness or death. The best medicine man among the Murngin told several of his patients that Muit was angry and had made them sick because they failed to see the Gunabibi through to its conclusion—an affront to the Python. The men's group separates

[626 753]

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open to human occupation by the drying of the land, the burning of the spear grass, and the disappearance of the swarms of vicious insects, these smaller groups coalesce into larger units which may contain as many as thirty or forty people and will contain many more if a large ritual is being celebrated. Every member of this group is related closely to at least one or more other individuals in the group, but to the rest he is only tribally related. Where the sea-turtle eggs on the sand beaches are most plentiful, the oyster beds most prolific and accessible, sea-bird eggs most abundant, lily and yam swamps most productive, and the cycad palm nuts ripened and ready for picking, there will be found the horde groups.

All of the people in the horde will be of friendly clans which are usually closely intermarried; if there are antagonisms they are suppressed or given expression in a peace-making makarata, which allows those involved to remain in harmony. As soon as food is plentiful the better areas usually become locations for the great rituals which take place at this time; the ceremonial life definitely enlarges the size of the horde groups. The camp of the horde is organized spatially in the same way as the clan lands are spatially related to each other.

Ritual sanctions at this time help prevent open strife, which is always a possibility whenever the clans come together. The belief that the totem will be offended if clashes occur between opposing clansmen usually keeps the peace. Ritual sanction, then, is the most powerful force in regulating the peaceful behavior of these larger food-gathering hordes. If it were not for these extreme sanctions the larger hordes could not be formed. Peoples with a background of feud and warfare who might not otherwise risk meeting one another can be fairly certain of peace in a horde gathered for a ritual. Since the local clans which start the ceremony have it well under way and the totemic emblems have been made and are in the camp by the time the first guests arrive, hesitant visitors can feel comparatively safe in coming to the ceremony. The bitterly antagonistic clans, however, who have a continuous blood feud tradition and a record of killing back of them would never be present unless under extreme circumstances, for religious sanctions or peace-making duels would not prevent open strife and possible secret killings between them.

The horde, then, is governed by the seasonal fluctuation of plenty or scarcity, and its extreme in size is effected by the attractive stimuli of important ceremonies.

The usual division of labor obtains during the period of the larger

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462 horde gathering and is intensified by it. The women gather small ani-
222 mals and all vegetable food, and the men fish and kill larger animals, although a man might gather yams or lily bulbs for himself if he were hungry. The women of the various clans of allied groups often go on foraging expeditions together.

2. *Gathering and Preparation of Food—Sexual Division of Labor*

462 The women furnish the bulk of the daily food. The men's contribu-
261 tion of meat, although much more prized, is less certain. When
224 kangaroos, wallabies, or emus are speared, turtles, dugong or porpoises harpooned, the whole group gorges itself after the meat has been divided properly and cooked in stone fires and ovens. The women are supposed to supply the food for the men while they perform the sacred rituals; although the men may hunt, fish, or go harpooning for sea animals at this time, they do it casually and not as part of their daily routine.

224 In the usual method of hunting kangaroos, a man or several men cover themselves with mud to prevent the kangaroo from seeing and smelling them and wait at a narrow part of the mangrove jungle. A group of young boys, sent to the other end of the jungle, spread out in a long line and start moving toward the men. They bark in a very high tone in imitation of the dingo. The boys progress fairly slowly in order not to frighten the kangaroos into too rapid motion. When the kangaroos get within throwing distance the men attempt to hit them with their stone spears. Kangaroos are also stalked; success here is possible because the animal usually sleeps in the daytime and can easily be approached to within accurate throwing distance.[3]

252 After an opossum has been treed and captured, it is hit on the head and the entrails are removed immediately. The intestinal fat is pulled off and cooked where the animal is captured. The intestines are carefully cleaned and opened and the gut is wrapped around the handle of a spear-thrower. When the opossum is to be cooked, all the openings of the carcass are closed, the hair is singed off, and the carcass put in the ashes and covered over with leaves and ashes. It is not cooked with a stone fire, as are larger animals, such as turtle, emu, kangaroo,

[151] [3] The Murngin are expert in identifying footprints. A little girl eight or nine years old can immediately tell one who made a particular footprint even though there are a hundred or more people who have placed their imprints on the earth about it. This is true even though the member is not present and the print has been made sometime in the past. Small female children of this age would be the poorest of any of the Murngin at identifying footprints.

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The same varieties of bivalve shells were found throughout the excavation. No stratification of any kind was found. The same tools were discovered a few inches from the bottom (as well as red ocher and white clay paints) that are being used by the modern aborigines of the area. 172

A ground stone axe was found within six inches from the bottom, or eight feet beneath the surface. This seemed to indicate a great antiquity for this implement in this area and therefore at least for its appearance in Australia. The finding of this axe was the most important positive contribution made by the two mounds that were excavated, since it was a positive proof of the long use of this artifact in North Australia.

The age of the shell mound must be considerable. The mound was only one of three larger ones and a number of smaller ones within a few hundred yards. All were composed of a compact mass of broken bivalve shells. The supply of bivalves in this area appears unlimited and forms a large part of the diet of the people; however, the population of the clans of this island was very small and could not have numbered more than twenty-five or thirty people, though during the shell and ritual season it might, for two or three months, rise to eighty or a hundred people; the year-round average could not have been more than approximately forty individuals. The natives said that before the mission came, no one lived there during the height of the rainy season because of its being badly infested with mosquitoes. It seems incredible that mounds the size of these could have been built by such a small group, and only a long period of occupation could account for the quantities of broken shells and the several large mounds.

## APPENDIX II

## MURNGIN ARTIFACTS

### 1. Shelters

The Murngin dwellings have a periodical alternation of types. During a good part of the dry season when the winds are not blowing, the only shelter is some tree underneath which a semicircle of ground has been smoothed. In the evening, if the winds are blowing cold, windbreaks are made. Sticks are pushed in the ground, protruding three or four feet, and brush is placed against them, possibly with the addition of a stone or two to keep the brush in place. 342

In addition to these very rudimentary summer shelters, the Murngin possess a number of more advanced house types:

*Type 1.*—For this type of house, usually built by women, easily bent sticks about six feet long are gathered. The overlapping ends of two are [462]

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929)1937
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342 tied together with pandanus leaf. The free ends are stuck into two holes which have been dug about four feet apart, to form the hut's front arch. Other sticks are planted about a foot apart in a semicircle in back of this arch. These are bent over and attached to the center of the main front arch, forming a hollow quarter-globe, whose closed side is always to windward. A woman then gathers paper bark, covers the whole of the skeleton with several layers, and lays medium-sized logs against the bark structure to keep the wind from blowing the cover away. A fire is always [372] made in front of the structure to keep off flies, mosquitoes, sand flies, and other insects. Outside, at the entrance of the hut, one sees singing sticks [351] (bil-mel), paper-bark receptacles, and other such articles, and here spear-thrower and spears are stuck when the man is present, while inside personal baskets of the men and women are kept.

[462] *Type 2.*—Men are more active in the building of the second type of house. They select a large stringy-barked eucalyptus tree, cut the bark off its trunk for a distance of eight to ten feet, and strip off and discard the outer bark. Six to eight pieces of the inside bark are usually gathered. Two parallel trenches are dug and the ends of the bark placed in them so that the whole forms a symmetrical archway. Usually two or three pieces of bark are put in the row, making a house with a total length of about seven feet. One end of the house is also covered with stringy bark, leaving one end open for a door. The structure is covered with a heavy coating of paper bark. Sand, stones, and logs are placed against the sides to function much like flying buttresses. They serve to keep the house firm in strong winds. The ground on the inside and in front of the house is hollowed out slightly. The excavating process continues through the winter months, until there is a rather deep hole where the occupants live, and a small-sized embankment in front from sand deposited on the "door step." All houses are built upon slightly raised ground where the sand is soft and comfortable.

*Type 3.*—This form of house is really a hybrid, and consists of the first and second types placed together, with the first forming the end and the second the length, making a larger and more elaborate hut.

*Type 4.*—Two sticks about four and one-half feet high are cut, each having a forked prong at one end. The other ends are sharpened and put into the ground about eight and one-half feet apart. A strong cross-piece is put into the forks to make a ridgepole. Stringy bark is then arched over the pole to make the two sides, or in some cases is leaned up against it so that the hut has only one side and is a kind of lean-to. Paper bark is placed on top of the stringy bark to keep out the rain, and sand and logs are added to keep it secure.

*Type 5.*—A piece of stringy bark about eight to nine feet long and three or four feet wide is placed semicircularly in the ground, sand being thrown on each side of it to form a windbreak. On the concave side the earth is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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and with an inch-long hook at the end is used. Each small hair ball is rolled out with the fingers into loose strands a few inches in length. Two strands are attached to the spindle and are twisted together by rolling the spindle down the leg of the seated native. The opposite end of the string is twisted in the opposite direction by the operator's other hand. More material is added until the string is complete. Opossum fur string is made in the same manner.

Both men and women make the vegetable and animal fiber string, although there is a not entirely unconscious tendency for division of labor on the traditional basis of women working with vegetable material and men with animal. Since the ordinary vegetable fiber used is root bark, and the usual instrument for digging such material is the digging stick—a woman's implement—strong impetus to women's making vegetable fiber string and an indirect restraint to men's making it result. Occasionally men do make vegetable fiber string, but very rarely. Even when a man wishes to construct his totemic emblem for the great Narra ceremony he puts his wives to the task of making the string. They, of course, do not know for what purpose they are making it, although it is likely that the more astute women have something more than a vague suspicion. Both men and women manufacture human hair string, but men predominantly.

Vegetable fiber string is used in the manufacture of the following articles: (1) the trunk of totemic emblems; (2) tassels of fringe on totemic emblems (this latter string is usually feathered, and would always be if the native had the necessary birds' down or small feathers); (3) mesh of fishing nets; (4) women's carrying bags; (5) women's and children's "harness"; (6) men's and women's pubic covering; (7) the wrapping of the ends of hair belts; (8) the wrapping of one variety of armlet; (9) the decorative fringe for baskets or to outline the design on a man's basket; (10) ordinary tying purposes; (11) necklaces; (12) forehead bands; (13) spirit bags; and (14) hafting.

Human hair string is used in making the following things: (1) fringe on a totemic emblem, but not for wrapping one; (2) fringe on a man's basket or for forming a geometrical design upon it; (3) cord on a bull roarer; (4) hair string belts; (5) string to tie around the ailing member of the sick; and (6) the tassel on a cylindrical spear-thrower. It is not used for fishing nets, women's bags, in the manufacture of women's and children's "harness," for any decorative wrapping purposes; nor ever for wrapping a totemic emblem, since the Murngin are fond of paint for decoration and human hair string does not take paint as well as fiber string does.

Opossum fur string, much rarer than vegetable fiber or human hair string, is used for pendants of the totemic emblems and upon men's baskets. It is also the chief material in making both men's and women's pubic aprons, although sometimes pandanus fiber is used, and occasionally root bark fiber. Farther south and east of the Murngin, in the district that is

1: Warner E-5 (1926-1929) 1937
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*Ainmaras.*—These native artifacts serve as a woman's article of apparel, a mat to sit on, a sunshade, and a mosquito and fly net. All of the uses except the first, which is primary, are employed by both men and women. 285

The ainmara is made of the inner bark of the pandanus with the twining technique. When open it looks like the bottom of a large basket, and when folded like a quarter section of a circle; it is ordinarily twenty inches long and thirty-six inches at its greatest width. The folded ainmaras are a constant equipment of women.

Sometimes the warp is left as a six-inch fringe around the edge of the ainmara.

The half-circle variety of the ainmara (twenty-six and one-half inches by thirty inches) cannot be used for a sunshade or mosquito and fly net.

Both are sometimes decorated with overstitched lines of pandanus fiber or human hair string. [631]

Ainmaras are made by both men and women, but usually by women. The woman starts at the center and gradually widens it as she continues her twining. The enlarging surface is kept smooth and even by placing the mat on the sand and rubbing it with a smooth flat stone. [462]

A small fiber string loop is put into the point of the folded ainmara and a woman carries it on her arm at the elbow or by holding it in her hand. Most of the women wear no pubic coverings and when a strange man approaches the camp they cover their pudenda with the ainmara. Sometimes a woman's modesty affects her in such a way that she hides her face rather than her pubic parts. [482] [291] 834

During the midday siesta men and sometimes women open the ainmara and double the body up beneath it to keep the flies off and protect themselves from the direct rays of the sun. During the sand-fly and mosquito months the ainmaras are used to keep off these insects.

### 3. Weapons

*Spear-thrower (Mang-el)*

The type of spear-thrower used by the Murngin and natives of northeastern Arnhem Land has a general distribution in Australia from the Kimberleys of West Australia to the southern shores of the Gulf of Carpentaria. The particular variety of this weapon found among the Murngin reaches the Daly River in the west and south, the Katherine River, also in the south, and east to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Groote Eylandt people possess a modification of the mangel type of spear-thrower. The Kimberley variety, although belonging to the same general type as the Murngin, is larger and is made of a different kind of material from that found among the Arnhem Land natives. 411 171

The length of the mangel ranges from thirty-four to thirty-nine inches, with a norm of three feet. It is made of a hard wood of medium weight 411

5: Webb M-5 (ca. 1930) 1934
O117 Murngin O117



## *Everyday Life*

262 511 Being a purely nomadic people, the greater part of the time of these aborigines is devoted to the procuring of food. The coastal districts of Arnhem Land are much better supplied than the arid areas of the inland, but even there a serious shortage of food is by no means infrequent. Almost all living creatures are eaten, as well as a large variety of roots and berries, but there is ever the daily uncertainty concerning the supplying of the body's needs.

461 517 When not engaged in hunting, the men spend many hours fashioning their weapons and utensils, in which work they display a marked degree of skill and ability. The preparations for, and the actual performance of, ceremonials occupy much time and energy, and in these their love of decorative and dramatic art finds truly remarkable expression.

462 The women are the real burden-bearers. When the camping ground is reached, it is the women who have to prepare the camp and obtain the necessary wood and water. Every day they engage in the search for food, such as the smaller animals, roots, berries, and shell fish. No matter how successful the men have been in their pursuit of larger game, the women must not fail in their daily contribution to the needs of the family. To them also falls the care of the younger children, and the construction of most of the utensils for ordinary use.

854 Great affection is shown by both parents for their children, who are rarely corrected, and whose every whim is responded to.

[142 145] When an aboriginal baby is born it is of a light yellowish colour, but during the course of a week or so darkens to the normal

[302] chocolate-brown of the race. For the purpose of ensuring this deepening of colour, the infant, when two or three days old, is rubbed all over with a mixture of ashes and powdered charcoal.

[856] Immediately after birth the nose is flattened and the nostrils distended by finger pressure. The form of the skull is also moulded by the mid-wife's hands.

853 145 Babies are nursed by their mothers until they are up to four years of age, and during that period are extremely plump and soft-fleshed. After weaning, however, they quickly develop into the spindly-limbed form characteristic of the children of many PRIMITIVE RACES.

6: Berndt E-5 (1946-1947) 1951
OI17 Murngin OI17



the men's duplicity. This is particularly apparent in the Djunggawul myth (*vide*, for example, Chapters I and IV). Merely because they do not join in certain of the most sacred mysteries, women do not feel "left out" of things, or pushed aside into what has been termed by some writers a profane existence, with attendant feelings of inferiority. On the contrary, they realize that they have a supplementary function in maintaining camp dancing, and answering the men's ritualistic calls from the sacred ground. It is necessary, for instance, that they prepare food for the men at such times, and observe certain tabus. A woman must know her own totemic clan songs, inherited from her father, and to a lesser extent those of her mother, and be able to sing them on appropriate occasions. She must know the correct dance movements and steps to accompany the men's singing in the "outside" ceremonies, as well as in the sacred rituals where she has her own part to play. There is no jealousy of the men's performances alone on the sacred ground. The men, so women say, are performing these ceremonies not only for themselves, but for all the people in general. This is simply a normal extension of the sexual division of labour and activity.

562 773 794 796 [424] [462]

* * * *

The story of the Wauwalak is rarely told in prose by a story-teller of this region. Usually it is transmitted from one group of men to another, through the generations, in ritual, accompanied by explanations, on the ceremonial ground. Moreover, the whole myth is related in the sacred "inside" Wauwalak cycle of some hundreds of songs, in two main series: the "inside" Bush cycle, and the "inside" seaside cycle, each describing in detail the adventures of the Sisters. There are also the "outside" (secular) Bush and seaside cycles, sung in the main camp to the dancing of women: these continue the story, and reveal many aspects of the myth. Each one of these songs is representative of the very best in native poetry,[1] which it is not possible to set down in the bare general translation presented here.

533 773

The Wauwalak myth begins in a region usually unidentified (*vide* Chapter IX), said vaguely to be somewhere south in the "Bush". This means, perhaps, that the Wauwalak sisters came from the direction of the Roper River, the hypothetical home of the Kunapipi Mother and her two daughters, the Mungamunga. In any case, the Wauwalak came northwards at an early period, towards the mainland opposite the Crocodile Islands (that is, near Milingimbi), bringing with them the rituals of the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak*. Then the myth itself became to some extent localized in northern Arnhem Land. It is on the mainland south of Milingimbi that the most sacred totemic sites connected with the Wauwalak are found;

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1. This is reserved for a detailed study of the Wauwalak Cycle in relation to the *djunggawon* and *ngu:rlmak* ceremonies.

## *Significance of the Djanggawul*

article of everyday use. Moreover, since it is symbolically associated with females, their use of it is not incongruous. The mat, conically shaped, is plaited from split and dried pandanus fibre, and usually has a fringe symbolizing the Sisters' pubic hair. Adult women and children still shelter under such mats from time to time. A child, for instance, may curl up asleep beneath one, completely hidden from view; and then he, or she, may be likened to the sacred *rangga* emblems which in the mythological period were kept within the mat.

The Djanggawul brought with them, too, a dilly bag woven from pandanus fibre interlaced with red breast-feathers of the parakeet, with feathered pendants attached. This is the sacred dilly bag or spirit bag called *jelagandja*, or *mundaidjngu*. It is sacred because it is worn by men during certain ceremonies, particularly the *dua nara*, and contains part of their spirit self; for this bag is also a symbol of the uterus, from which (or, alternatively, from the *ngainmara*) men and women came forth in the beginning. Waxed knobs fastened at intervals along the feathered string may contain foreskins, said to be an allusion to fertility. These bags, although highly sacred, are not kept on the ritual ground, nor are they regarded as secret. Worn by men in the camp, they are seen by all, and women too may use them at times. In fact, their making is often entrusted to women, who in the Milingimbi area also prepare the beautiful feathered string (although in the north-eastern area this particular variety is made by men). It is only when the bag is almost finished that it is passed over to the men, who ritually, to the accompaniment of sacred invocation and singing, cut the loose fringe (the pubic hair or, alternatively, the clitorises of the Two Sisters)[1] and attach the red feathered pendants (the rays of the sun from the Djanggawul). The bag is then returned to the women, who complete the edging and attach the handle of jungle twine. The men who have cut the fringe, because they belong to *dua* moiety groups responsible for the *nara* Djanggawul rituals, are termed 'the Children of the Djanggawul'—like the children who came in the beginning from the sacred uteri of the Sisters (*vide* the myth and the songs).

The Djanggawul also carried with them sacred poles, known as *rangga*. These poles are very sacred; they are used only on the ritual ground, and are seen only by fully initiated men or by neophytes. Women, however, know of their existence and can describe their shape and decoration, and discuss their meaning.

[1] The basic symbolism of this, as an umbilical cord, will be discussed later in this volume.

7; Berndt E-5 (1946-1950) 1952
OI17 Murngin OI17

## *Epilogue*

533 These factors obviously centre about the survival of the Aborigi-
539 nal social group, and in that respect they suggest an important
831 sociological attitude. The Djanggawul Sisters, through their perpetual pregnancy, and their ability to produce great numbers of *rangga* folk, the ancestors of the present-day Aborigines, express their true function as Fertility Mothers. They define the physical differences between males and females, between the *rangga* and the mat; expressing this symbolically, they put the *rangga* boys who emerge from their wombs into the coarse grass, the *rangga* girls into the shelter of the *ngainmara*-uterus mat. By stressing the sacredness of womankind, this Aboriginal culture has enshrined motherhood, for it is realized that the continuity of the group is dependent primarily, and in a more spectacular way, on the female. To ensure this fertility, however, 'that the *rangga* within the *ngainmara* may remain plentiful', the contribution of the virile male is essential. The myth, therefore, acknowledges both physiological paternity and maternity. The *rangga* is as sacred as the *ngainmara*; and insemination (symbolically expressed in a variety of forms) is a biological necessity in the fertility sequence of coitus, conception, pregnancy and childbirth.

533 Two other important features receive attention in this cycle.
539 The first, and perhaps the more important from a sociological point of view, is the division of labour between the sexes. The
462 Djanggawul Sisters lose their sacred basket or dilly bag and *rangga* emblems, and the men take over control of the *nara* ritual. Now the Sisters must grind the cycad nut to make 'bread'; their 'hands must be whitened with its flour'. This mythological incident indicates, symbolically, the present division of activities between the sexes. It is not a question of any alteration in woman's status:
[562] she is not subordinated, or relegated to an 'inferior' position. On the contrary, stress is placed on the complementary nature of their activities. Woman must not resemble man, any more than man may resemble woman, the essential nature and implications of each (apart from biological factors) being culturally determined; hence the clitoris of each Sister is cut, so that it may not resemble a man's penis. Man may not be idle, merely collecting and preparing food while woman performs all sacred ritual, possesses all the *rangga* emblems and in addition carries out her important task of producing children. If women are to ensure the continuity of the group through childbearing, then men must perform the sacred ritual and do the more strenuous work; for this reason, so we are told, the men stole from the Sisters the sacred basket and *rangga*
533 and took charge of the *nara* ritual.
539 The second feature is the institution of the sacred *nara* ritual,

live in the single men's camp. The brother-sister tabu, which is very strict, now comes into operation, and his sisters as well as his mother are prohibited from eating any of the game that he kills and which is now known by a special term, *kälŋboi*. But he still receives vegetable food from his mother and from certain other female relatives which he reciprocates with gifts of fish, honey or "sugar bag" and any other food the eating of which is not restricted by *kälŋboi* tabus. Later as he acquires status and the tabus upon the game he kills are removed or relaxed, he will make regular reciprocal gifts of animal food to his *ŋandi* and to the other female relatives upon whom, prior to his marriage, he was dependent for vegetable food.

262 431 593 602 883

The division of labour is well-marked. The chief task of the woman, besides the bearing of children, is the collection and preparation of vegetable food and of shellfish, as well as such small game as rats, bandicoots, opossums and *kuku*, "sugar bag", the honey of the small black native bee (*Trigona* spp.), as she may glean by the way. Each woman works for her own family group—her husband and children—but some of the food that she obtains may also be sent to relatives to whom she has obligations defined by kinship. Others again may be prohibited from partaking of this food because of their kinship or other status at certain stages of their own or the woman's relationship to the society. Most of the food obtained by a woman during menstruation is tabu to certain relatives—particularly to her brothers. Contrary to the general idea the main food supply among aborigines, except at certain restricted seasons of the year, is not animal, but vegetable, and in Arnhem Land upwards of sixty food plants are known. Some of these are local and are obtained more or less casually and in small quantity. But a comparatively small number, which

222 462 [594 602] 222 262 [609] [841]

9: Thomson E-5 (1935-1943)1949
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down the back when empty, but when full the weight is usually borne on the forehead, or if the load is a heavy one, the baskets are carried on top of the head.

At first glance, Arnhem Land, like many other parts of Northern Australia, may appear to be barren and inhospitable and to offer little promise for the gathering of vegetable foods. But it must be remembered that over the centuries the aborigines have accumulated great experience of the food plants of their environment, which is handed on from generation to generation, and that they have developed highly specialised methods for exploiting every resource of the territory in which they live. The food resources of Arnhem Land are rich and varied and the natives have developed effective processes for the preparation of its vegetable foods, as well as many clever and ingenious devices for the capture of fish and game.

Again the cooking and preparation of food is far from the crude or haphazard business of popular imagination. *ŋätsu* is not the only poisonous plant which is used as food. A number of other food plants also contain soluble poisons which are eliminated by simple and effective, but often prolonged, cooking and washing.

The women are dexterous and neat in all their technological processes, and to watch them at work in the preparation of vegetable food is an object lesson in the skilful and efficient use of the simplest equipment.

The task of the men is to provide animal food, both fish and game. As a rule, when a large quarry such as a kangaroo is killed, it is cooked and quartered on the spot, and is then divided equally among those taking part in the hunt. It is taken back to camp in a cooked or half-cooked state, often wrapped neatly in paperbark. Each man again divides his share of the game according to his obligations defined by

224 kinship, with due regard to certain ritual observances, such
262 as restrictions and tabus. The game may then be warmed
602 on the hot embers, and shared out among those members of the family who are permitted to eat it, that is, among those whose status in relation to the social group, in initiation, or to the man who killed the kangaroo, does not place him or
[778] her under a tabu. The flesh of any kangaroo or other game which is killed with a spear or other weapon which is *yarkomirri* (lit. "having a name") that is, which has been dedicated to a sacred clan totem, is also sacred, and may be eaten only by members of the restricted group comprising the fully initiated members of the clan. On these occasions
[887 when the food or game is tabu, the division of the quarry
616] is in the hands of the old men of the clan, or more particularly, the men who apply the term *ŋandi* (mother)—reciprocal term *wäkku*—to the clan concerned, to whom it is *yindipulo*. The traditional rights of these men take precedence even over those of the hunters who killed the quarry. The men who officiate in these divisions of food or game, as on most ceremonial occasions, are by kinship status necessarily members of the opposite moiety.

431 In addition to hunting, and to the elaborate and exacting
462 ceremonial life in which every man plays a part, and which occupies much of his time, he must make and maintain his own spears, spear-throwers and fighting weapons. It will be seen later, that a man may actually acquire some of his spears and other weapons as gifts by ceremonial exchange. But as he also incurs an obligation to send spears
[461] to others within this system, such gifts do not actually relieve him either of the work or the responsibility of spear-making, but rather give him an incentive, an urge, to work and to devote the necessary time to the manufacture of fine weapons in order to maintain his prestige within the CEREMONIAL EXCHANGE SYSTEM.

ceremonial exchange system. Besides weapons and fishing lines, the heavier types of rope as well as most of the larger fishing nets, are made by men. In the coastal groups where bark canoes are used, the making of these craft is also the work of the men. In the case of dugout canoes, a man either makes his own canoe, a long and laborious task taking weeks or months of time and requiring a good deal of intensive hard work, or he employs a craftsman to make it for him, in which case he assumes the responsibility for the organisation of the work and for the payments involved. The large, coarsely woven fish traps, which may be five or six feet, or even more, in length, as well as other paraphernalia associated with fishing, are usually made by the men, although women may also assist.

How subtle may be the driving force which induces the natives to work, is shown by the following example. During the south-east or dry season the people rarely build houses, but are content with breakwinds, until the north-west or wet season. Even then they generally delay the work of gathering bark and other necessary building materials until the actual onset of the rains. During a patrol at the beginning of the north-west when we were debating as to whether a heavy storm that threatened was really about to break, one of the natives said "*ŋärru tobitj*",[18] "my muscles have twitched", (and therefore it will not rain). And such is the belief of the natives in these portents that the people would not go out and collect the necessary paperbark to make a proper camp, despite the threatening sky.

[18] Muscular twitching, called *tobitj*, is an omen or portent which is believed to give warning of a forthcoming event, or to foretell the approach of an enemy or a visitor. The part of the body in which the twitching occurs indicates the relationship in which the visitor stands to the person who receives the warning.

461 462 Apart from the material for the making of spears and spear-throwers, and the woven baskets for carrying fire-sticks and other possessions, each man gradually collects, incidentally, as he hunts, the raw materials used for cere-
[237] monial purposes, such as the orange-red breast feathers of the Red-collared Lorikeet[14] and the fur of the Brush-tailed
[431] Opossum (*Trichosurus vulpecula arnhemensis*). Every man thus strives to accumulate articles of value, possessions or *gerri* (see page 5), of the appropriate type, which he will send later to relatives of certain orders within the intricate exchange cycle in which he has a place (pp. 67-68). The need to build up a reserve of *gerri* for use within the exchange cycle supplies still another incentive, or urge, to work, and so to be ready to meet these obligations. A man, therefore, must necessarily spend most of his waking time in working. As a craftsman the aborigine is neat, tidy and efficient, but he follows traditional methods and techniques closely, because they form part of the culture pattern into which he is born, and which is for him a heritage from ancestral times.

512 Let us look at the camp of a typical horde of Arnhem Land in the early morning, in order to get some understanding of the way in which these people live, and a picture of the daily routine of hunting and the organisation of work.
[361] The camp is situated generally on high or well-drained ground, and in the dry season is merely a cluster of fires, perhaps with a low breakwind on the windward side, each fire marking the camp of a family, or of a group of single men. In the early south-east season, during the months of

[14] These rich orange-red feathers of the Red-collared Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus rubritorquis*) are used chiefly by clans of *dua* moiety for the ornamentation of the sacred *rärrgu*, and are called *tjukurr*, literally "fat".

Late in the afternoon, generally about sundown, the people will be seen returning to camp from the day's foraging, the women carrying baskets of food on their heads, rolls of teatree bark (*Melaleuca*) for sleeping mats or for use in cooking, and great loads of firewood. On arriving in camp they light the cooking fires and perhaps make another journey for firewood to carry them through the night, and to bring water from a nearby well or lagoon. If the food to be prepared is of a type which requires much washing during the preparation they may take it close to water to prepare, bringing it back to camp to cook. 512 [482] [513] [252]

Although men do gather some vegetable food, and women also capture small game, besides shellfish, the division of labour is sharply defined and at once evident. The woman is primarily the provider of vegetable food, collectively, *ŋäta*, the getter of wood and water, the maker of light baskets and the smaller and more finely made nets. The man is the hunter, the provider of animal food, and is responsible for the conduct of large scale drives for fish and game. The making of weapons, heavy implements, canoes, canoe paddles, heavy fish traps and baskets of coarse heavy fibre, called *koiyapoi*[16] (fish-for) or *ŋätapoi' larr*, (*ŋätapoi*, food-for; *larr*, open or coarse in texture), for the carrying of heavy loads of fish and vegetable food, is also the responsibility of men. 462 [227] [415]

The first impression that any stranger must receive in a fully organised group in Eastern Arnhem Land is of industry. He cannot fail to see that everybody, man or woman, works hard, and that the work is well organised and runs smoothly. And he must also be impressed by the fact that with the exception of very young children who engage earnestly in play, much of which is imitative and 461 [857]

[16] *-poi*, suffix "for".

BASED ON THE ACTIVITIES OF ADULTS, THERE IS NO IDLENESS.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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141 516 in front of him, and in this position his knee-cap is on a level with his chin. Another habit, dependent on long shins and as common as the white man's hands-on-hips, is to stand on one leg with the other drawn up so that its foot rests above the other knee-cap. Anyone can laboriously do the trick but only a long-shinned aboriginal would find it comfortable.

142 Corpulence is not found in Arnhem Land, for Yulengor have little opportunity to put on weight where food is scarce, poorly balanced, and mostly roughage. Women spend most of their time hunting, and frequently travel twenty or thirty miles a day in their search for food. By carrying huge loads on their heads they acquire a unique poise and graceful carriage unknown elsewhere.

[462] [482]

Men seem to have short necks, but this is due to chests being so well developed that they give the impression of being deliberately thrown out and upward. Back and pectoral muscles ripple the skin and the whole body tapers sharply.

Aboriginal hair is dark to black in colour, though on children's heads the tips are frequently bleached a reddish-brown. It is wavy and curly, but never fuzzy, and is fine in texture rather than coarse.

Eyes are set deep under beetling brows; pupils are smoky blue-black, and the rest of the eye is definitely not white, but rather veiled and blotched a yellow pastel shade. Finely chiselled ears lie close to the skull in both young and old; the nose, though deeply cut away between the eyes and uniformly broad, cannot be termed flat.

Aboriginal teeth are strong and well formed, and are astoundingly effective in snipping through bush rope, holding and straightening a spear in a vice-like grip, and masticating tough meat and fibrous foods. Teeth give little trouble and most of them are retained for life, even if worn down to the gums.

[164]

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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disease, scarcity of food compels the occupants to look for fresh sites. 364

Well-defined tracks link food-gathering areas and meander in or around jungles and along swamps and creeks wherever there is good hunting. Accompanied by a couple of aboriginal families and a few boys, I followed one of these tracks for about forty miles to where a distant horde had migrated. Men went ahead with their spears, and the women followed with young children, family possessions, and food-gathering dilly-bags. Every little while there was an outbreak of squealing from the women and yelping from the dogs, as a bush rat or other animal was dragged from a hollow log or tree. Occasionally a woman darted off from the track and some miles farther on rejoined the party with a bundle of edible roots or yams. 487 484 [224] [222]

By sundown we left the bush and came out on a sandy beach on the northern shores of Port Bradshaw, and men and boys were soon lying on the sand waiting for the women to prepare the camps, dig in the sand for fresh water, and cook the shellfish. Once the food was ready, the women took it to their husbands, who shared it with unmarried companions. Darkness comes quickly in the north, and married men settled down with their wives and children around their separate family fires, whilst the unattached males discreetly camped some distance away. Unmarried men always separate themselves from family groups, and any visiting males temporarily without wives stay with the bachelors. Not infrequently married men determine where the bachelors' camp is to be made, and with vivid memories of their own youthful and indiscriminate ways, rigorously enforce this segregation. In the bush, ever-courteous nomads reserved a place for me beside the young men's fire, but never anywhere near a family group, although the youths have sometimes been strangers and the married families well known to me. [462] [312] [264] 361 589 [123]

## YULENGOR

484 I was awakened by the trilling of a butcher bird, and as the sun tipped the motionless trees we resumed our journey through dew-laden grass. No food had been saved from the night before and sharp eyes were on the look-out for something to eat, but it was not till about ten o'clock that the women cooeed and a halt was made to cook an opossum and two goannas.

The day was uneventful and at sundown we came to a deep crocodile-infested creek about a quarter of a mile wide. As there were no canoes about, I wondered how the crossing [481] was to be made, but without hesitation several youths waded in and swam over with their spears. This is the way all the men would have crossed, but Jirring suggested that he and I wait with my medical equipment and camera till his wives and children arrived with their food and family possessions. [501] They were prepared for the crossing, and had sheets of paper-bark which they stacked in heaps on the water, driving digging-sticks through each stack to hold them together. Small children and bundles of food were then piled on top, older children clung to the sides, and a woman swam beside each pile as she pushed it to the other side. Medicines, camera, and swag were successfully shipped in the same way. Such crossings, with yelping dogs, shrilling women, and squealing children, apparently scare away hungry crocodiles, for they seldom attack, although on this occasion several glided off the mud into the stream as we approached. At dusk we came to the camp of a Blue Mud Bay horde, some distance from the river.

[947] [64] I spent several days in this camp with Yulengor I had not seen before, and was able to treat wounds and ulcers and give hypodermic injections for yaws and gangosa. By day 484 the men stayed under leafy bough shelters, talking, sleeping, 512 and preparing totemic emblems with intricate and artistic 462 designs. Women went food-gathering, and at sundown arrived with loads of firewood and dilly-bags bulging with

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OI17 Murngin OI17



fern-roots, yams, lizards, and shell-fish. Most of the night was spent in singing and dancing. 484 [512] [462]

Sunrise on the fifth morning saw the camp deserted, for nomads invariably take their leave abruptly. The Blue Mud Bay horde was on its way south, and my party soon set out for Yirrkala.

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775 763 hundred miles away, and it was thought that two Yirrkala men had been killed. The men who were with me immediately supported the tidings with the evidence of the fires in the bush, that had obviously been lit by the mali of the dead men, who had travelled the hundred miles to inform their friends.

775 Unexpected and distant smoke is at times considered to come from mali camp-fires. Without consciously contradicting the statement that mali are spirits, Yulengor complacently attribute unrecognizable footprints and other physical functions to them. An unknown canoe carried in on the tide or found on an island is accepted as having been used by mali when hunting or fishing.

562 881 Women have been assigned a very inferior place in aboriginal society, and it almost seems that they attend some ceremonies to focus attention on the men. But at least one ceremony is carried out entirely by women, at the coming of a first menstrual period.

A young wife, on recognizing the menarche, informs her mother, who then forbids her to leave her windbreak. Food and water are brought to her, and most likely she will [285] [308] curl up in her 'nganmurra', or cone-shaped mat, till she recovers. She is painted with two bands of clay below the shoulders, and red, yellow, and white vertical lines are made between these bands. Whenever menstruation recurs, 362 841 women smear themselves with ochre and painstakingly abstain from eating men's food. Dugong, turtle, fish, and [302] birds are regarded as men's food, and men are expected to spear them; women content themselves with collecting [462] yams, roots, and shellfish. With undisguised chagrin, a wife in this temporary quarantine will sit with her husband and his wives round the camp-fire, painted red and with her back turned, and will nibble a yam or shellfish whilst the family consume turtle, kangaroo, or fish.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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## YULENGOR

Lagoons overflow in the wet season and hundreds of acres of low-lying land are under water. It is country where water-lilies grow in profusion. Women dive for the root-stocks and roast great quantities of them. Lily seed-pods are eaten raw, sieved through network dilly-bags, or ground between stones and baked into cakes.

The most palatable of all vegetable food is probably the corm or swamp rush, 'rarkai', and these swamps are famous throughout Arnhem Land. Rarkai rushes cover brackish swamps near the coast, and women systematically turn over many acres of black mud in their search for the nut. In east Arnhem Land I know of several such swamps, each of which supported a hundred or even two hundred Yulengor for six weeks at a time. During the corm season the hordes make the swamps a rendezvous for corroborees, ceremonies, and initiations. Corms are about the size of marbles, and in addition to being the most nutritious of all their vegetable foods they possess a pleasant nutty flavour.

Several foods have totemic significance and find a place in ceremonial practices. Probably the most important of these is 'ngutu', the nut of the cycad palm, and it is said that this yellowish brown nut was first eaten by spirit-Ancestors, who instructed their daughters in the art of preparing it. Legend declares that as the knowledge was received first by women, they have for all time to attend to the gathering and cooking of all vegetable foods.

Hard-shelled cycad nuts are cracked between stones, and the kernels soaked in water for three or even five days. Most of the poison is thus leached out, and the pulp is wrapped in bark and buried in hot sand over which a fire is lit. Cycad meal can be baked into flat coarse cakes that sometimes weigh up to fifteen pounds, that keep for days, and can be carried long distances for use at ceremonial gatherings. 'Ngutu' has sustaining properties, and Yulengor live on it for weeks as they prepare for inter-tribal corroborees.

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
OII7 Murngin OII7



Variety in this otherwise uninteresting vegetable diet is provided by fish, birds, reptiles, and small animals. Women fossick in jungles for land-snails and large white wood-grubs, and when the tide is out they comb the mud flats and reefs for mangrove worms, shellfish, oysters, lobsters, and crabs.

Some women train dingoes to help in their ceaseless search for small animals, reptiles, birds, and eggs. A dingo pup, captured in the bush, henceforth shares the family shelter, travels in the canoe, and is fed and petted with the children. They are often called 'son' by the owner and referred to by the relationship term used for the owner or his child. When a favoured dog dies, it is buried and wept over in much the same way as a child. Women gash their heads and wail, one of the men conducts a mourning-song and dance, and I have seen them switch themselves with leafy twigs to drive off the canine ghost!

Dingoes breed freely with domesticated dogs, and most of the wild dogs in Arnhem Land now bear unmistakable traces of the white man's dog. However, the pure-bred dingo is by no means extinct, and there are many of these large, strong, good-looking brown dogs in Arnhem Land. When they are well fed (they seldom are), they grow to almost twice the size of a kelpie and are attractive in appearance, but they cannot bark. It seems certain that the dingo migrated with the first aborigines, and Dr F. Wood-Jones, an authority on the dingo, says: 'The dingo and the Stone Age dog of Europe are practically identical and both but little removed from the Palearctic wolf stock from which they sprang. Man and dog were both migrants.'

Several Yulengor legends referred to the creation of dingoes by aboriginal Ancestors. In one story, it was said that having already formed the nuclei of several hordes, the Ancestors came to the grassy plains south of Arnhem Bay, where they made a magpie, an opossum, and two dingoes. Summer showers drove the birds into a tree, where they

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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888 [562] perhaps partially blind, with rheumatism stiffening their joints, and with their small and once shapely hands calloused and twisted through digging. In a mustering camp, I overheard casual remarks which led me to suspect that two old women had been left by younger wives to perish in the bush. None of the Yulengor attached any importance to the story, and I found it hard to obtain reliable information. They were just not interested, and by the time I arrived on the scene, the aged women had been dead for a day or more. One had been blind and had been left at this camp in the sand-hills without water or shelter, although both were to be had a few chains distant. Countless dingo tracks led to and from the horror we buried under a pile of stones.

595 462 Stone Age man is usually benevolently disposed toward his wives, but when he has a number of them he tends to leave the work to them, and only as he feels inclined does he exercise a man's prerogative and hunt for kangaroos, wallabies, and emus, or spear fish and turtle. He is expected to control his women. He adds little to the small-talk, and when he does make a remark it is generally of the kind that implies: 'When I ope' my lips, let no dog bark.' Old Baratjuna reclined in camp whilst his wives prepared for the hunt. Some were going to a distant swamp, others were to forage near by. One wife wanted to go to the swamp, but her husband told her to stay in the camp and mind the young children. She complained for a time, and seeing that she provoked no response she made a move to go to the swamp. But before she had taken a dozen paces her husband threw his stone axe at her and broke a rib; that, as far as he was concerned, ended the incident.

595 562 [582] From childhood, women take an inferior place; they are often studiously ignored; they are treated as chattels, yet genuine family affection does exist. The constitution of a family is sometimes conducive to good feeling, for a man's

15:Chaseling M-5 (ca. 1934-1936)1957
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As the idea was generally popular, they went into the sky, and there they can be seen today as the Pleaides. Next morning the leader outlined a plan for the future: 'Let us cut two new canoes. The men will go in one and the women will hunt for our food from the other.' And from that time forth, women have hunted by themselves and gathered vegetable foods, shellfish, and small animals, and the men, less frequently and according to their inclinations, have gone on their spectacular quests for kangaroo, emu, dugong, turtle, and fish. Furthermore, the Julpan decreed that this same division of labour should apply on earth, and for that reason women have always been the principal food-gatherers in aboriginal society.